DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 192 603 FL 011 818

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TITLE Clans of the Iroquois. Lesson Plans and Activities.
INSTITUTION Salmon River School District, Ft. Covington, N.Y.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (ED), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 78
NOTE 26p.: For related documents, see FL 011 817-819.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *American Indian Culture: American Indians: Class Activities: Cultural Background: Elementary Education: *Experiential Learning: Family Structure: *Learning Activities: *Lesson Plans: Vocabulary Development
IDENTIFIERS Iroquois League: *Mohawk (Tribe)

ABSTRACT

This collection of lessons intended for use with elementary school children contains material that is descriptive of the Mohawk People, a group of the Iroquois Nation. The booklet contains an introduction on traditional kinship and family systems, unit outline on the concept of the clan, vocabulary, objectives and materials, and five lesson plans. The lesson plans cover the three main clans of the Mohawks: additional Mohawk clans: how clans are passed down: the duties of a clan mother: and activity lessons to construct a clan symbol and necklace. Each lesson plan includes vocabulary, purpose, instructional objectives, materials, methods, and evaluation. The booklet is illustrated with pen-and-ink drawings. (AMH)

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CLANS OF THE IROQUOIS

Lesson Plans and Activities

Adapted from the Cultural Education Guide

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1978

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CLANS OF THE IROQUOIS

All of the material within this booklet is descriptive of the Iroquoian Culture of the past; however various aspects of the culture continues to exist in the longhouse tradition at the present time. The clans discussed within this booklet are those of the Mohawk People - a group of the Iroquois Nation. Additional clans of the other Iroquoian groups have not been included here.

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TRADITIONAL KINSHIP AND FAMILY SYSTEMS

The clan is the true identity of Iroquois Indians; it is the factor in knowing who they are. It is composed of many families of equal importance. Included in the clan are all who are biologically related through matrilineal blood line. In the past, father, mother and children were referred to as the "Fireside Family" since they occupied a common compartment and shared the central fire in the longhouse. Since descent is traced through the mother's lineage, Membership in the clan is restricted to the mother and children with the father retaining his membership in the clan of his birth.

A clan is named after an animal which acts as its guarding spirit, i.e., Deer, Wolf, Snife, Heron, Hawk, Bear, Beaver, Turtle, Eel. Indians who belong to a common clan are considered relatives regardless of the nation in which they have membership or the territory they inhabit, i.e, members of the Wolf Clan of the Mohawks are relatives of the Wolf Clan of the Senecas. Since they consider themselves of the same bloodline, members of the same clan are not encouraged to marry.

A woman acts as head of the clan and is referred to as the "Clan Mother". Among her designated functions are: The appointment and removal of Confederacy Chiefs; the setting up and approval of marriages, the supervision, the planting, cultivation, and harvesting of crops. In

addition, one of the important duties of the Clan Mother is that of holding names possessed by the clan. Indian children receive from their clan mothers a hereditary clan name. A child cannot be given a name that is already possessed by a living clan member. Upon death, the name is returned to the clan to be reused. However, the bearer of a name is expected to carry the name with honor or the name can be revoked.

The Indian today does not always live in close proximity to the members of his clan. This is especially true of the Indian of the city. In many cases, he has become so far removed from his clan, that he is unaware of it.

The Iroquois People(Buffalo, New York: Buffalo Public Schools, 1973), p. 8. 2

UNIT 1 HOME AND FAMILY

CONCEPT:

1. The clan is the true identity of Iroquois Indians.

VOCABULARY:

clan identity, clan mother, clan symbol

OBJECTIVES:

The student will be able to:

1. explain that clans are named after an animal which acts as its guarding spirit.
2. select, from a group of animal pictures, the 3 main clans.
3. select, from a group of animal pictures, additional clans.
4. describe how the clan name is passed down from generation to generation.
5. know that those of the same clan are considered relatives.
6. explain that the woman acts as head of the clan.
7. list the 3 duties of the clan mother.

MATERIALS:

Large pictures of each clan symbol(turtle, bear, wolf, snipe, deer, blue heron, beaver). Picture ditto sheets with each clan symbol for student folders, bone clan symbols, activity sheets.

TOPIC: Three main Clans of the Mohawks

GRADE LEVEL: 1 - 4

TIME: 30 minutes

VOCABULARY: rotiniaten (turtle clan), rotiskerewake (bear), ronathaione (wolf clan)

PURPOSE:

To introduce the three main clans and to create an understanding that the clan is a means of identifying Iroqoian people.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:

The student will:

1. explain why clans are named after the animals
2. recite the three main clans of the Mohawks
3. identify and name three clans from a chart of several animals
4. discuss the facts that the clan name is handed down from the mother.

MATERIALS:

Charts with clan symbols, wooden plaques depicting clan symbols, activity sheet

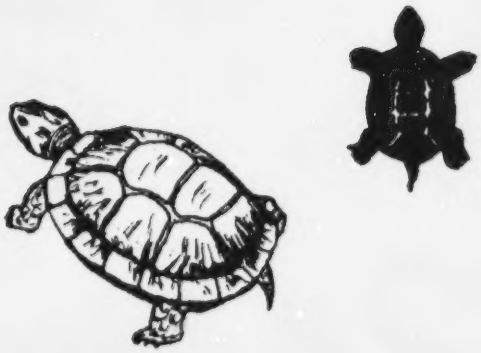
METHODS:

Relate to the students that Indian people identify their families through a system called the clan system. The clan symbols for the Iroquois are chosen from the animal kingdom. These animals act as a guardian spirit to the people of a clan. Hold up a clan chart with the turtle, bear and wolf pictures. Explain that these three animals are

clan symbols for the three main clans of the Mohawk. Call on individuals, asking each to name the three main clans of the Mohawk. Explain that the clans are handed down through the mother. The child will inherit the clan of the mother. The father of the children will have the same clan as his mother. When people marry, they marry one of another clan. Those with the same clan are considered relatives and do not marry. One clan is made up of many families.

EVALUATION:

Given a work sheet, the students will answer all five questions correctly.



Name_____

CLAN ACTIVITY SHEET

Fill in the blanks, choosing the correct word from this list:

bear families wise animal wolf mother
respected turtle longhouse clan mothers

1. The three main clans of the Mohawk are_____ _____, and _____.

2. The clan is handed down to the children from the _____.

3. The clan is made up of_____.

4. The clan symbols are made up of_____signs.

5. The father's clan is the same as his_____.

TOPIC: Additional Clans of the Mohawks

GRADE LEVEL: 1 - 4

TIME: 30 minutes

VOCABULARY: rotinesiio (snipe clan), wahtatennotseronies (ball deer clan), awenkeha (blue heron), ratiniatons (beaver clan)

PURPOSE: To acquaint the students with additional Iroquoian clans.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:

The student will:

1. name the animals, representing the clans, from a clan chart;
2. choose the clans from a group of several animals;
3. recite the clan names in Mohawk;
4. name, in review, the main clans.

MATERIALS: Chart with snipe, deer, blue heron, and beaver; picture of several kinds of animals, activity sheet

METHODS:

Hold up the clan chart with the snipe, deer, blue heron, and beaver. Name these animals and explain that these animals represent other clans of the Mohawk. Hold up a picture of several animals. Ask students to choose the clan symbols from this picture. Say the clan names in Mohawk, pointing to each animal symbol. Have the students recite

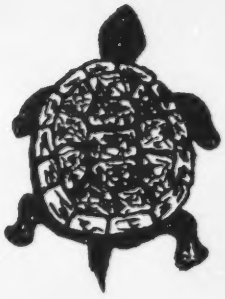
the Mohawk names for each clan. Ask students if they can remember and name the three main clans of the Mohawks.

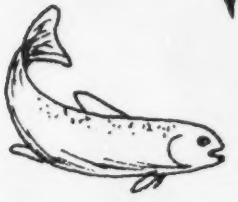
EVALUATION:

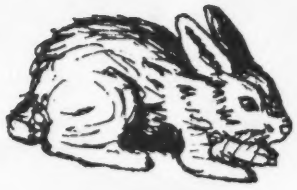
The students will list seven clans and color the pictures on an activity sheet.

CLAN ACTIVITY SHEET

CIRCLE EACH CLAN PICTURE AND LIST THE NAMES BELOW







1._____

2._____

3._____

4._____

5._____

6._____

7._____

TOPIC: How Clans are Passed Down

GRADE LEVEL: 1 - 4

TIME: 30 minutes

VOCABULARY: o'tahra (clan)

PURPOSE: To acquaint the students with the fact that the clan is passed down from generation to generation.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:

The student will:

1. recall, in review, the Mohawk clans;
2. name those clans that are considered relatives;
3. explain how the clan is passed on.

MATERIALS: clan chart, clan activity sheet

METHODS:

Review with the students the names of the clans. Discuss with them that clans with the same symbol/ same animals are considered relatives. Explain that in the clan system, the clan symbol and clan name are passed down from the mother's side of the family. All of her children will have the same clan. The father keeps the clan from his mother.

EVALUATION:

Each student will make his/her own family tree; listing their brothers, sisters, parents and grandparents.

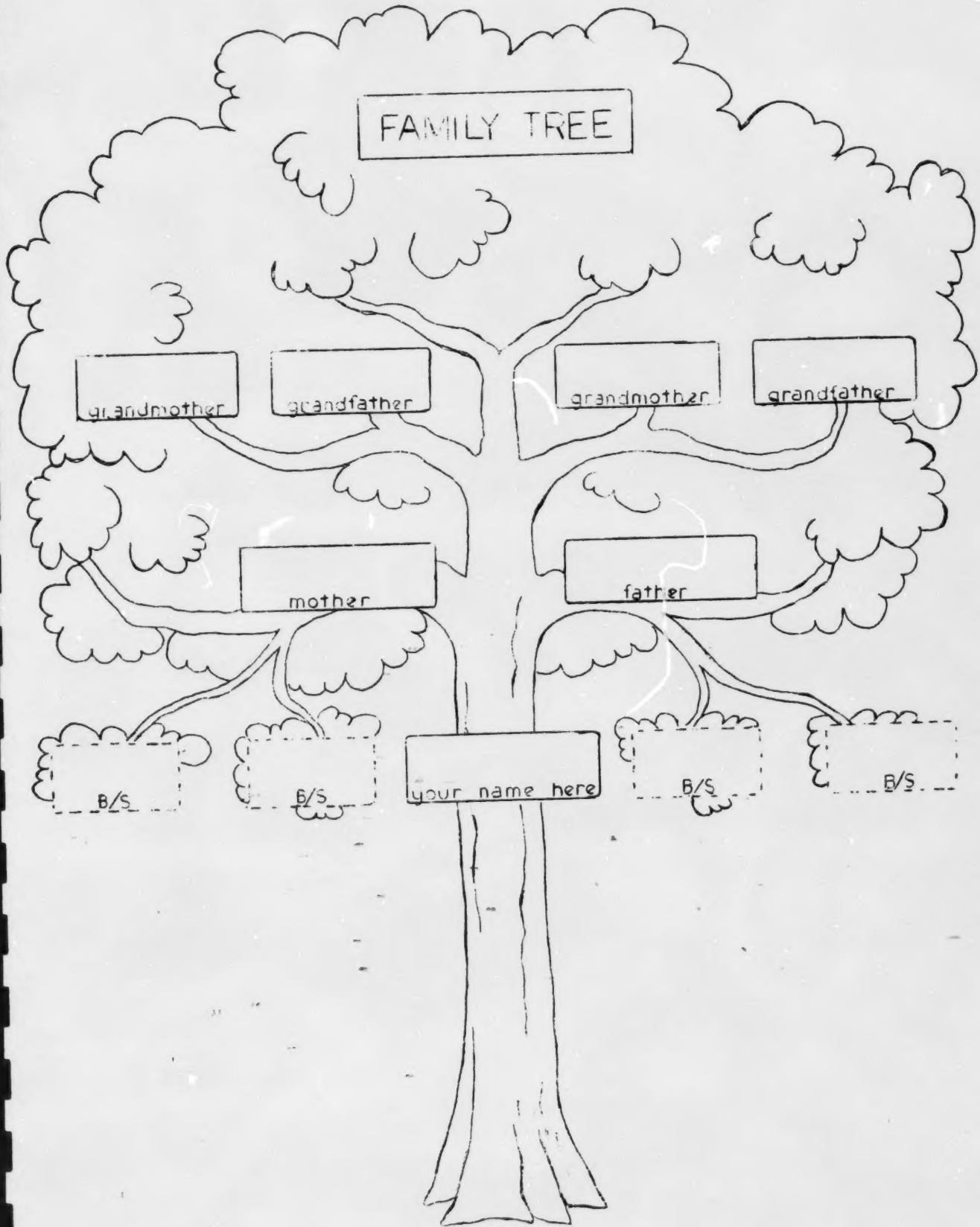
TOPIC: Family Tree Activity

MATERIALS: drawing paper (12 X 18"), magic markers, pencils

METHODS:

Discuss with the students the idea of a "family tree". Explain that it means the parents, grandparents, great grandparents and etc. Have the students draw a large tree with upper middle and lower branches. On the lower branches, write your own name and your brothers or sisters. On the middle branches, write the names of your parents. On the upper branches write the names of the grandparents.

Display each students's family tree on the bulletin board.


FAMILY TREE
grandmother
grandfather
grandmother
grandfather
mother
father
B/S
B/S
your name here
B/S
B/S

TOPIC: The Duties of a Clan Mother

GRADE LEVEL: 1 - 6

TIME: 30 minutes

VOCABULARY: kanistensera (clan mother)

PURPOSE: To teach students the duties and importance of the clan mother.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:

The student will:

1. explain the importance of the clan mother;
2. list 3 duties of the clan mother;
3. describe how the clan mother dresses in long-house ceremonies.

MATERIALS:

Picture of clan mother in traditional dress, dolls dressed in traditional dress, activity sheet.

METHODS: Hold up a picture of a clan mother. Explain to the students that the clan mother is very important. It is an honor to be chosen clan mother. Discuss the many duties of the clan mother. She is to appoint a chief to represent the nation in important meetings, advise the chief in time of trouble, make sure that all those appointed for performing in a ceremony, are present. The clan mother advises those waiting to marry, and arranges the marriage ceremony. She calls clan meetings and keeps fully informed. The clan mother has the

responsibility of removing the chief from office if he does wrong.

Show the dolls dressed in traditional clothing. Describe the clothing. Explain that this clothing is still worn by the clan mother in longhouse ceremonies held today.

EVALUATION:

Each student will be able to name at least three duties of the clan mother and complete correctly 6 out of 8 questions on the activity sheet.

Name_____

ACTIVITY SHEET

CLAN MOTHER

Duties of a clan mother:

Fill in the blanks by choosing the correct word from the list below:

Mother's chief honor permitted clan marriage not permitted relatives clan mother

1. The_____has a very important role in Indian Society.
2. Those people of the same clan are considered____ _____.
3. People of the same clan are _____ to marry.
4. The_____is a form of identifying who you are.
5. Clans are handed down through the _____ side of the family.
6. The clan mother appoints the_____.
7. The clan mother arranges _____ceremonies.
8. It is an_____to be a clan mother.

ACTIVITIES AND PATTERNS

TOPIC: Clan Necklace Project

GRADE LEVEL: 1 - 4

TIME: 30 minutes

PURPOSE: To provide a culminating activity for student's recall of the most known clans associated with the Mohawks.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:

The student will:

1. recall the names of the clans orally;
2. draw the clan picture;
3. color the design that they make.

MATERIALS:

4" piece of cardboard, yarn strands cut into 15" lengths, pencils, felt tip pens, scissors & paper puncher

METHODS:

Give the students a 4" square cardboard on which they will draw a clan symbol picture. Have them cut a circle around the drawn picture and color the picture. Punch two holes at the top center portion of the circle. Insert the yarn strands through these holes and knot it at the back. The student will write their names on the back of the clan design and it will be ready to wear.

EVALUATION:

Each student will be able to choose a clan symbol from those studied and illustrate it.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: Clan Symbol

MATERIALS:

2" square pieces of felt, several beads of desired color, thread, needle, 2" square piece of leather-like material

METHOD:

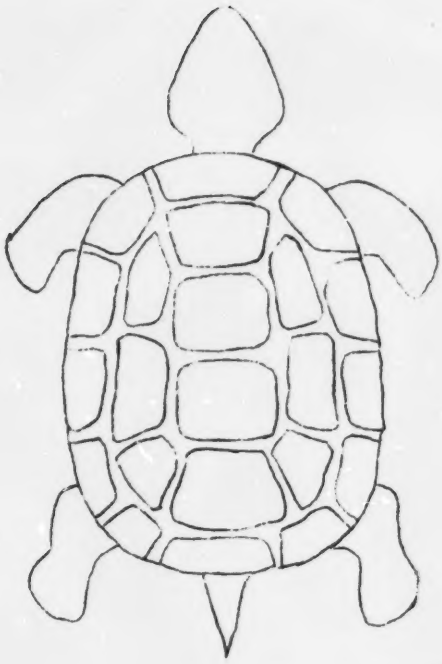
Provide each student with above materials. Direct the student to draw the clan symbol on the felt. With the threaded needle, the student will bead the outline of the animal.

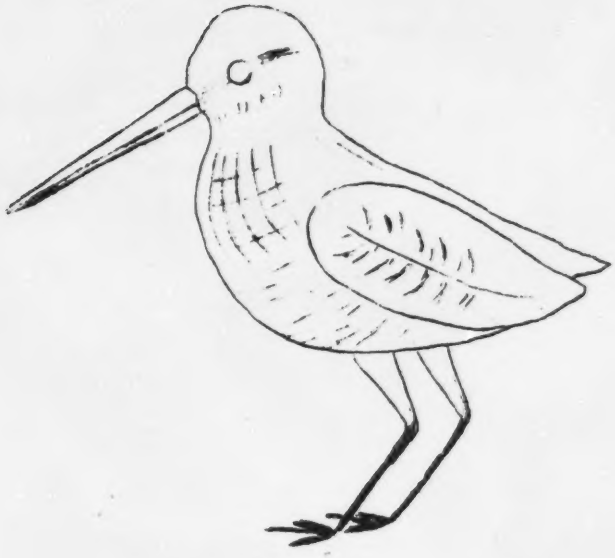
VARIATIONS:

For the turtle symbol, a large 1" button (the kind with no button holes, but the thread hole is on the underside) might be used for the body. The beading would be for the outline and for the head and legs.

button

outlines of the 3 main clans





CLAN SYMBOL PATTERNS